The FOLLY OF Sinning,

Opened & Applyed,

In Two

SERMONS,

Occasioned by the C[illegible]
of one that wa[illegible]
Boston in *New-Engl[illegible]*
November 17*th.* 1698.

By Increase Mather, Præsident of Harvard College in *Cambridge*, and Preacher of the Gospel at *Boston* in *N.E.*

Rom. 16. 19 *I would have you wise unto that which is good, & simple concerning evil.*

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The Doctrine may be confirmed in three *Propositions.*

PROPOSITION I.

Sin is an Evil not to be made light of. Several things may be mentioned which are sad Evidences, Convictive *Demonstrations* of the Truth before us.

Demon. 1. *Sin is the greatest Evil.* There not, nor can there be another Evil as Sin is. The Scripture ne Name of *Evil* [illegible]

[illegible] *take them out of the world, wouldst keep them from* the *evil*; Sin, which is the evil of evils. which has made all other things has made the best and most ex Creatures in the world to become worst. It has made the Fallen Ange be *Evil Angels*: Whereas in their E

Estate they were Glorious Creatures: *Sons of God, and Morning Stars.* How great must that Evil be, which can turn an Angel into a Devil? Sin has done this, and that as to millions of them. There are more Devils then there are men in in the World; since there is no man, but there are Devils to Tempt him unto sin; we read in the Gospel of thousands Devils possessing one miserable man. Sin that has made so many Devils. was a glorious Creature before he The most glorious Crea- made next to the An-

...us do. *knows his Owner, and the Crib, but Israel doth not doth not understand.* Alas! worse then bruits, who will acknowledgment to their Fee- Beast wont meddle with that he knows by an instinct of nature is

is poysonful and hurtful to him; yet thus irrational are men. Altho' they are told, and cannot but know that Sin is deadly poyson, and that if they commit such Sins, their Souls must dy for it; for all that they will venture. Sin has made men to be thus unreasonable. Nor is there any Creature on earth an enemy to God, but only man, and Sin has made him so. It is Sin that has made this World to be an *Evil* World. Gal. 1. 4. *This present evil world.* Had it not been for Sin, this World had never been an Evil One. It has brought a Curse and Misery on the *Creation*, so that the whole Creation sighs under it, and groans to be delivered from that corruption, bondage, vanity and misery which the sin of men has cauled it to become subject unto. *Rom.* 8. 22. There had never been any other Evil, if it had not been for Sin. No man would ever have known by any experience of it, what Evil meant. Hence the forbidden Tree was called *the Tree of knowledge of good and evil.* Gen. 2. 17. Men should have had an experimental knowledge of Good only, and not of Evil, if they had not sinned. Sin then is the greatest evil. It is an *only evil*; Other Evils have some

mixture of good in them, but Sin hath not so: Nor is it possible ever to make it good; Nor has it in its own nature any tendency unto good. It is not the cause of any good. It is true, that Sin may through the wisdom power and goodness of God, ordering and over-ruling all things, be an occasion of good. This we see in *Onesimus*, who was guilty of theft, and ran away from his Master, and was Committed to Prison, where the Apostle *Paul* became the Instrument of his Conversion. *Philem.* 10. A great sin may be an occasion of the Conversion, and so of the Salvation of a Sinner, but not the cause of it. A corrupt Tree cannot bring forth good fruit. Does a Fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter. No Fountain can yield both salt water and fresh. *Jam.* 3. 11, 12. All the waters of sin, are salt and bitter. Nor does any thing but what is bitter, come out of this Fountain. If we compare Sin with other Evils, we shall see that it is worse than any of them all. It is a greater evil than any Affliction. A man had beetter see many Afflictions than one sin. Affliction tho' evil has some good in it, but so has not Sin. *David* said, *it is good*

for

for me that I have been afflicted. Pſal. 119. 71. He does not ſay, it is good for me that I have ſinned. Gods Children find Afflictions to be profitable things unto them. He does *chaſten them for their profit* Heb. 12. 10. Therefore they may bleſs God for ſending Afflictions on them. It is reported concerning that Holy man, Mr. *Dod*, that when a very bitter Affliction befel him, *Well* (ſaid he) *I will go into my Study and bleſs God for this Affliction, for I am perſwaded that He intends to do me good by it.* But a man may not ſay, I thank God I was left, to commit ſuch a ſin. The Lord has promiſed that He will in faithfulneſs afflict his Children; He will hedge up their way with Thorns, to prevent them from ſinning. In the Covenant of Grace there is a promiſe of Phyſick as well as of Food: Afflictions are Phyſick for the Soul; but the Lord has not promiſed that He will leave his Servants to fall into great ſins, although He has promiſed that if they do ſo, He will recover them out of their falls. Outward Afflictions will not cauſe God to depart. When *Joſeph* was Sold into Egypt, *God was with him.* Act. 7. 9. His Servants never experience more of his preſence with

them, then when under sore Afflictions and Temptations. When they walk through the midst of the Valley of the shadow of death He is with them. *Psal.* 23. 4. But Sin will cause God to depart. A Prophet said, *The Lord is with you, whilst you are with him*, but *if you forsake Him, He will forsake you.* 2 Chron. 15. 2. When *Israel* Sinned, the Lord withdrew from them, and told them that if they did not put away the accursed thing, He would be with them no more. *Josh.* 7. 12. *Sampson* found this to be true by woful experience, although He was not at first sensible of it. Judg. 16. 20. *He wist not that the Lord was departed from him.* It was because he had Sinned, that the Lord departed from him. When the case is so with a man, that he must either suffer or sin, if he is wise, he will chuse to suffer any thing rather then sin. *Moses* did like a Wise man, when he *chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, then to enjoy the pleasures of Sin.* Heb. 11. 25. For the greatest Affliction has not so much evil in it as the least Sin. Death is a more formidable evil than Affliction: But Sin is far more evil then Death it self. *Solomon* found it to be *more bitter than death.*

Eccles.

Eccleſ. 7.26. And ſo ſhall every Sinner find it to be, either by bitter Repentance for it, or elſe by being puniſhed for it, when Repentance will be too late. *Men ought to reſiſt unto blood ſtriving againſt ſin,* Heb. 12. 4. They ought rather to looſe their blood, to part with their lives, then to Sin againſt God. Thouſands of Saints have choſen Death rather than Sin. It is ſaid of the Primitive Martyrs, *they Loved not their lives unto death.* Rev. 12.11. They might have lived much longer if they would have Sinned to ſave their Lives; but they choſe rather to dy than to ſin. Some of the Bleſſed Martyrs choſe to be tortured to death, rather than to commit a ſeemingly little ſin. Eccleſiaſtical Story informs of one that had his life offered to him on condition that he would contribute but ſo much as one half penny to encourage the Building of an Idolatrous Temple; but he choſe rather to dy by moſt Exquiſite Torments. And the Scripture ſpeaks of them who were *tortured not accepting deliverance.* Heb. 11. 35. When that bloody Tyrant *Antiochus* told thoſe Martyrs he would ſpare their lives if they would but eat one mouthful of Swines Fleſh, they choſe rather to be tortured to

death,

death, than to transgress the Law of God, although it were but in a Ceremony. Sin is a greater evil than Hell it self. Yea, there is more evil in one sin, then in all the Everlasting Burnings of the bottomless pit. The Holy God has made Hell to punish Sinners. *He has ordained Tophet of old, He has made it deep and large, the pile thereof is fire and much wood, the breath of the Lord like a stream of brimstone does kindle it.* Isa 30. 33. But God is not the Author of Sin. He is the punisher of it, has made a strict Law against it; but never was or can be the Author of it. Now if Sin be the greatest Evil, more evil than Affliction, then Death, then Hell it self, it ought not to be made light of.

2. *Sin displeaseth God.* Therefore it should not please men Zech. 1. 2. *The Lord has been sore displeased with your Fathers.* He would never have been displeased with them at all, if it had not been for Sin. The sins of men are called their *Offences.* Hos. 5. 15. *until they acknowledge their offence.* Shall a poor creature make a light matter of offending the Almighty? Sin cannot but be displeasing to God, because it is contrary to his revealed Will,

Will. Every Sin is a violation of that Law which is expreſſive of the Holy Will of God. It is indeed a deſpiſing of the Law. Lev. 26. 15. *If ye ſhall deſpiſe my Statutes.* Sinners caſt away the Law of the Lord of Hoſts, and deſpiſe the Word of the Holy One of *Iſrael.* Iſa. 5. 24. A Sinner is a practical Blaſphemer; he ſaith of the Law of God, that it is no good Law; that it is a Law not worth the regarding. Neh. 9. 26. *They caſt the Law behind their backs,* as a man caſts a thing that he deſpiſeth, behind his back. A Sinner *Judgeth the Law.* Jam. 4. 11. by tranſgreſſing it, he judgeth it to be a bad Law. Is ſuch blaſphemy a light matter, or to be mocked at? Sin is Rebellion againſt the Lord. Hoſ. 13. 16. *Samaria has rebelled againſt her God.* Sinners make an Inſurrection againſt Heaven. Mic. 2. 8. *They are riſen up againſt me as an Enemy.* They take up Arms againſt the Infinite and Eternal Majeſty. Act. 5. 39. They are found *even to fight againſt God.* Sin grieveth the Heart of God. When the Old World became exceeding ſinful, it repented the Lord that he made man on the Earth, and *it grieved him at the heart.* Gen. 6. 6. When the Children of *Iſrael* were in the

Wilderneſs, *Forty years was he grieved with a ſinful generation.* Pſal. 95. 10. The Lord ſpeaks of the ſins of men as if his heart were broken by them. *Ezek.* 6. 9. *I am broken with their whoriſh heart, which has departed from me.* And ſhall men make light of that which is ſo grievous to God! Sin is a diſhonour to his Name. *Rom.* 2. 23. *By breaking the Law thou diſhonoureſt God.* Some ſins eſpecially caſt horrible contempt on the Glorious Name of God. Sins againſt knowledge (which the Scripture calls *preſumptuous Sins*) do ſo: Numb. 15. 30. *The Soul that does ought preſumptuouſly reproacheth the Lord,* as if he were either an Ignorant or an Impotent God: As if he either did not know that ſuch an affront was offered to his Name, or had not power to revenge it. Sin is a practical diſowning and denying the glorious Attributes of the Ever Bleſſed God. When men ſin, they do not really believe the Omnipreſence of God. Ezek. 8. 12. *They ſay the Lord ſees us not, the Lord has forſaken the earth.* There are Sinners, that if they thought a man, nay, a child of ſeven years old, that could tell of it, ſaw them, they would not commit that ſin. Do they then really believe that God ſeeth them?

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That He by whom they must be Judged another day, looks on them all that while! By sin men defy his Power: Sinners give the Almighty the challenge. Isa. 5. 19. They said, *Let him make speed and hasten his work, that we may see it, and let the Counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know it. q. d.* He has threatned us a long time, but why does not he do what he threatens? Let him come and do his worst, the sooner the better, we fear him not. We must not suppose that they did in words thus express themselves, but this was the language of their sinful practices. They lived as if they had been really of that opinion, as if they thought they could be too hard for the Almighty. Sin calls the Truth of God into Question. God says, If thou dost transgress my Law, *ye shall surely dy for it*: But Sin and the Devil says, it may be not for all that. *Gen.* 3. 8. Therefore it must needs provoke him. How are men provoked if their fellow creatures give them the Ly? And will not the most High God be offended, when wretched men shall make him a Liar? Sin strikes at the very Life and Being of God: It says, that there is no God in Heaven. It is an

Iniqui-

Iniquity to be punished by the Judge, for it *denies the God that is above.* Job 31. 28. So far as a man is a *Sinner*, he is an *Atheist.* Psal. 14. 1. *The fool has said in his heart that there is no God.* It is hardly possible for a man with a rational soul really to believe that there is no God; but the fool wisheth there were none. And he does not believe that there is such a God as indeed there is. He is ready to think that God is altogether such another as himself, which is to Ungod him. He says in his heart, that God is not so Holy a God as his Ministers and as his Word declareth him to be, which is in effect to say, that He is no God: For if He should be less holy then He is, He should cease to be God. Holiness is called the Life of God. *Eph.* 4. 18. Wherefore Sin which strikes at the Life of God, is the highest Treason. And is it then to be made light of? By what has been said, it is manifest, that Sin is highly displeasing to the Lord; and the Lord himself has in more ways then one made it known, that Sin does provoke the Eyes of his Glory. He has made men and Angels to see that he can not endure it, by his punishing of it. Sometimes the Holy God has inflicted dreadful

dreadful puniſhment on his Creatures for one ſin. So He did on all the Angels that ſinned. *Jude 6. The Angels which kept not their firſt eſtate, he has reſerved in Everlaſting Chains under darkneſs, unto the Judgment of the Great Day.* Would the Great God baniſh millions of thoſe moſt Glorious Creatures out of Heaven, and damn them to Chains of Everlaſting Darkneſs, for one ſin, if Sin were not an evil infinitely diſpleaſing to him! So *Adam* and all his Poſterity, of which there are thouſands of millions, are made miſerable for one ſin. They are all condemned to dy for that one ſin. *Rom.5.12. By one man Sin entred into the world, and death by ſin, ſo death paſſed upon all men.* And in verſe 14. It is ſaid, *that Death reigned from Adam to Moſes, even over them that had not Sinned after the ſimilitude of Adams Tranſgreſſion.* There were about two thouſand and five hundred years from *Adam* to *Moſes.* All that lived in that Time, even Infants, and all who never ſinned after the ſimiiitude of *Adams* Tranſgreſſion, yet are dead, becauſe of that ſin of his. So all that have lived and died in ſucceeding Ages. In ver. 18. the Apoſtle ſays, that by *the offence of one,* (or as the words

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di henos paraptomatos may be read) by *one offence* Judgment came *upon all men to Condemnation.* No Sin of *Adam*, excepting one, was imputed to his Posterity, *viz.* his first sin in eating the forbidden fruit; for after that he ceased to be a publick person representing all mankind; so then, for that *one sin*, he and all his Posterity were condemned to Death. Behold yet further the severity of God. He has sometimes punished seemingly little sins after a dreadful manner, that men might see how their sins displease him, and that they might tremble to sin against him. When *Nahad and Abihu* instead of taking fire from the Altar according to Divine Institution, would follow their own invention, and make use of another fire, without any warning given to them to repent of their sin, God killed them in a moment; there went out fire from the Lord and devoured them, and they dyed. When in the Wilderness a man did but gather a few sticks on the Sabbath day, God from Heaven commanded that that man should be stoned to death. When *Uzzah* inconsiderately took hold on the Ark, intending no harm, only to keep it from falling, God smote him for his error, and there he dyed

dyed by the Ark of God. When the men of *Bethshemesh* looked into the Ark, probably with no ill design, only to see whether the *Philistins* had not taken some thing out of it, *the Lord smote of the people, fifty thousand and threescore and ten men.* 1 Sam. 6. 19. some have wondred how that could be, because *Bethshemesh* was a small Town, not containing fifty thousand, nor so many as five thousand; but as 'tis probable the people round about the Country hearing that the Ark was come to *Bethshemesh*, came flocking thither, and did reverently look upon it, [illegible] might not do) and for [illegible] into it; and for this [illegible] thousand, not of the [illegible] only, but *of the people*, lost their [illegible] So highly is God offended at sin. But his Holy Displeasure at sin appears in nothing so much, as in the dreadful sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ, when he stood in the room of Sinners, sustaining their person before God his Father. Rom. 8. 32. *He spared not his own Son.* Christ is Gods own Son, and a Son that never offended him in any thing. Christ is dearer to God than all the Angels in heaven, or men on

earth. Nevertheless, when He became a Surety for Sinners, God would not spare him, nor abate him any thing of the punishment due for sin. The truth is, God never pardoned any sin without satisfaction made for the injury done to his Name thereby. No sin but God either has punished it in the Surety and Saviour of Sinners, or he will punish it in the Sinner himself to all Eternity. And shall wretched Creatures make a light matter of that which is so hateful God! This therefore shall be the ...nstration of the Truth be-

...e Sins ... Elect were the procu... cause of all the bitter Sufferings which Jesus Christ the Son of God Endured. Christ had no Sin of his own to suffer for. Dan. 9. 26. *Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself*; not for any thing that He had done amiss. Inasmuch as the Man Christ Jesus is the Son of God, or one in person with the Eternal Son of God, it was impossible that He should Sin: In Him dwells the fullness of the God-head bodily, and therefore He neither did nor could Sin. But the Sins of His People were impu-

imputed to him. 2 Cor. 5. 21. *God ha's made him to be Sin for us who knew no Sin, that we might be made the Righteouſneſs of God in him.* God ha's imputed the guilt of the Sins of his Elect unto his Son Jeſus Chriſt, who out of Love to his Fathers Glory and the Salvation of his People, was willing that it ſhould be ſo: He was therefore made a Sin Offering, that ſo God might deal with us as if we were Sinleſs and Righteous. Becauſe Chriſt ſuſtained the perſon of Gods Elect, the puniſhment which was due to them fell upon him. Iſa. 53. 5, 6 *He was wounded for our Tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our Iniquities. The Lord ha's laid on him the iniquity of us all*; that is the puniſhment due to us all ha's been laid upon Him. This was taught by the Sacrifices under the Law. The Creature offered as a Sacrifice muſt be Killed, by which the offerer confeſſed that he deſerved to dy for his Sins, only the Creature was to dy for him The Goſpel of which, was, That Chriſt dying in our ſtead ha's Saved us from Eternal Death. Gal 3 13. *Chriſt has redeemed us from the Curſe of the Law being made a Curſe for us.* The Curſe of the Law is an inexpreſſibly dreadful thing; nevertheleſs

less, Christ the Son of God became Subject to it, because of our Sins that he might deliver us from the Curse. What terrible things did Christ suffer for our sakes? Never man did, nor could suffer so much as He the blessed Son of God endured on our account. Isa. 52. 14. *His visage was so marred more than any man. and his form more than the sons of men.* His Holy Body endured most exquisite pain and misery. 1 Pet. 2. 24. *Who his own self bore our sins in his own Body on the Tree.* When he was Crucified, his holy hands and feet had nails driven through them, whereby he was fastned to the Cross, because our works and walkings had been evil in the sight of God. Those sinewy parts, the hands and feet cannot be pierced through without inexpressible pain. In this misery did the Son of God hang on the Cross for six hours one after another, that so we for our sins might not be hung up in Everlasting Chains of misery as we deserved. But Christ's Bodily Sufferings, were nothing to the sufferings of his Soul. He poured out his Soul unto death; His Soul was made an offering for sin. He felt the pangs of the Second Death, the pain whereof is unconceivable. He was there-

therefore in an Agony in the Garden, and ſweat great drops of blood, and prayed with ſtrong cries and tears, that if it were poſſible that Cup might paſs from him. Can we think that the Son of God would have been in ſuch an Agony, if he had been to ſuffer nothing but a bodily death? Would the thoughts of that have put him into a bloody Sweat! Shall we imagine that he had leſs courage in him then ſome of the Martyrs! But if Chriſt endured all this for our ſins, ſhall we make a light matter of Sin. The conſideration of what Chriſt ſuffered for our Sins, ſhould make us afraid of the leaſt Sin, and not to make a light matter of any Sin: No not of idle words. No man ever ſpoke an idle word in his life, but either Chriſt dyed to obtain the pardon of it; or, he that has been guilty of it, muſt dy for ever for it. Nor was there ever a ſinful, no nor ſo much as a vain thought in the heart, but if Chriſt the Son of God had not dyed to obtain the forgiveneſs of that thought of thy heart, thou muſt have lain under the Curſe and Wrath of God for it throughout Eternal Ages. Say now, is Sin to be mocked at?

4. *Sin is the procuring cauſe of all thoſe Judgments which men are expoſed unto* Jer. 4. 18. *Thy way and thy doings have procured theſe things unto thee: This is thy wickedneſs, becauſe it is bitter, becauſe it reacheth to thine heart.* What bitter ſorrows and miſeries do ſome Sinners undergo? They may thank Sin for it all. Should they then mock at, and make mirth with ſin? There are three ſorts of Judgments which Sin expoſeth men unto; all which ſhow that it is not an evil to be made light of.

1. There are *Temporal Judgments.* All the Afflictions which befal the Sinner whilſt in this World are the fruit of Sin. Pſal. 107.17. *Fools becauſe of their Tranſgreſſion, and becauſe of their Iniquity, are afflicted* Poverty is a great affliction, and Sin is the cauſe of it. That provokes the Lord to ſend Impoveriſhing Judgments on a whole Land ſometimes. Iſa. 42. 24. *Who gave Jacob for a Spoil, and Iſrael to the Robbers? Did not the Lord he againſt whom we have ſinned?* Men looſe their Eſtates by Enemies, by Water, by Fire. But if it had not been for Sin, none of all this would ever have been. For a man to looſe his good Name is a greater evil then

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to loose his Estate, since a Good Name is better than Riches; but this also is the effect of sin. Prov. 14. 34. *Sin is a reproach to any people*: Some sins especially are an everlasting reproach to the person that shall be known to be guilty of them. Above all other transgressions, vile breaches of the Seventh Commandment are so. The man that shall be proved guilty of them, hath lost his good name for ever. Prov. 6. 32, 33. *whoso committeth Adultery with a woman, lacketh understanding, a wound and dishonour shall he get, and his reproach shall not be wiped away.* That Sin will be a disgrace to him as long as he liveth, and after he is dead too. All bodily diseases, and death it self is the fruit of sin. Had it not been for sin, Soul and Body had never been rent asunder. It is for sin that some Dy in youth, because they have been wicked overmuch, they dy before their time; and it may be by tragical and dismal deaths, by *grievous deaths.* They are crushed in the Gate. The Sword of Justice cuts them off for being Criminals, and not worthy to live. There is a great variety of Temporal Judgments, and all are the fruit of sin: Judgments on particular persons, on Fami-

lies, on Nations, are the fruit of sin. How terrible is God in his doings sometimes towards the children of men, in respect of publick National Judgments, which their sins pull down upon them? So on the Old World, when the Windows from on High were opened, and God poured down the Cataracts of his Wrath on a sinful sinning World: How many millions were swept away with that Beesom of Destruction? Sin caused all the men, and women, and Children in the whole World to be drowned in one year, excepting eight persons only. What a fearful day did Sin bring upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, when all the people in those Cities were destroyed in one moment? It was Sin that provoked the Lord to rain down fire and brimstone, and an horrible Tempest upon them. In our days, yea not five years ago, we have heard of Earthquakes that have swallowed up whole Cities at once, and no less then an hundred and forty thousand Souls then perished. Is Sin which brings such Tremendous Judgments on the World to be mocked at, or made light of?

2. *There are Spiritual Judgments*, which altho men are least sensible of them, are

far

far more dreadful than any Temporal Ones. As the Soul is far more worth than the Body, ſo Spiritual Judgments which lite on the Souls of men, are more to be trembled at, than thoſe which concern the outward man only. Theſe are the woful fruit of Sin. The Loſs of the Divine Image is a Spiritual Judgment. Sin has brought that miſery upon every man in the world. Rom. 3. 23. *All have ſinned, and come ſhort of the glory of God.* There was in man before he ſinned, knowledge and wiſdom, which made him reſemble God, but ſin has taken from him that glory. But the Image of God in man did chiefly conſiſt in that Holineſs wherewith his Soul was beautified. Without Holineſs the Angels of Heaven would be Damned Devils, and the Saints in Glory Damned Ghoſts: But this Sin has deprived men of. So that by nature no man has the leaſt ſpark of grace or holineſs in him. Rom. 3. 10. *There is none righteous, no not one.* But inſtead thereof, all manner of ſpiritual plagues is Sin brought on the miſerable Souls over-run. A blind mind is a Spiritual Judgment which every Sinner is ſmitten with. He is blind, and cannot ſee afar off. Perſons that have di-

ſeaſed Eyes, the light hurts them; they ſee the worſe for it. So does the light of the Goſpel as to thoſe that have minds prejudiced againſt the Truth: Therefore Chriſt ſaid, *For Judgment am I come, that they which ſee might be made blind.* Joh. 9. 39. Hardneſs of heart is a Spiritual Judgment: None of the ten plagues of *Pharaoh* were ſo dreadful as that; but it is ſin that hardens the hearts of men. Heb. 3. 13. *Take heed leſt your hearts be hardned through the deceitfulneſs of Sin.* There are ſome, that there was a time when if they had committed ſuch a Sin, Hell would have been in their Conſciences for it, but now they can do it, and laugh and make a mock at what they have done. Thus are they ſmitten with Judicial Hardneſs of heart. The Lord never puniſheth ſin more fearfully then when he puniſheth Sin with Sin. It may be a Sinner has been guilty of the ſin of Uncleanneſs. God to puniſh for it, leaveth him to commit that Sin again, and ſaith, *Let him that is filthy be filthy ſtill.* Or it may be, he ſhall be left to thether Sin, it may be to Murder it ſelf, which is the greateſt Sin againſt the Second Table of the Moral Law. Yea, (which is awful to conſider)

Sins

Sins of Omission provoke the Lord to leave men to sins of Commission. Psal. 81. 11, 12. *Israel would none of me. So I gave them up to their own hearts lust.* Hearken you that live in the neglect of Religious Duties: You that live without Prayer in your Families. I have a dismal Story to tell you, and yet a true one. There was a man Condemned and Executed for an odious Crime, (whom God out of his Infinite Grace made a remarkable penitent) he then said, that he believed his Sins of Omission, and *in special his neglecting Prayer in his Family*, provoked God to leave him unto other sins, and at last to that sin for which he justly suffered Death. Then let no man among you that has a Family, dare to live without Prayer therein.

3. *Sin is the procuring cause of Eternal Judgment.* Mat. 25. 46. *The Wicked shall go away into Everlasting Punishment.* Sin brings upon men not only the first, but that which is infinitely more terrible, *The Second Death.* The first death is soon over, but the pains and pangs of the Second Death will never be over. The first death is of the Body only, but the Second Death is of the Body and Soul

too. *Fear not them that can kill the Body, but fear him that can kill both Body and Soul.* How can the Soul which is Immortal be killed? The Soul that's damned is killed. After the Resurrection and the Last Judgment the Sinner must Body and Soul be cast into the Ever burning Lake. *Murderers and Whoremongers, and all Liars shall have their part in that Lake which burns with fire and brimstone which is the Second Death.* Rev. 21. 8. In those Everlasting Burnings must they be world without end. This comes of sinning against God. If it had not been for Sin, there would have been no death, no hell. It is sin that has kindled the Fire that never shall be quenched. Sin has filled the bottomless pit with all the fire and brimstone that is there. It is sin that has filled it with all those Treasures of Wrath that can never be consumed. Shall we then make a light matter of Sin? Shall we be such Fools as to mock at it? But thus for the fourth demonstration of the Truth before us.

5. *One Sin unrepented of will be the ruin of a precious and Immortal Soul.* The Soul of a man is a most precious thing. How often have you been put in mind of that Scripture,

Scripture, which a Religious man once adviſed a King to think of every day, that Scripture. Mat. 16. 26. *What is a man profited if he ſhall gain the whole world, and looſe his own Soul? Or, what ſhall a man give in exchange for his Soul?* Altho' Sinners like fools as they are, know not the worth of their own Souls, their Adverſary the Devil knows it, and therefore will promiſe them any thing if they will but let him have their Souls: He'l never ſtick at the price; he'll promiſe them the Enjoyment of that which their hearts are moſt ſet upon. He'll promiſe them they ſhall have the things of the world; the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eyes, and the pride of life; but if theſe things are bought with the price of an Immortal Soul, they are dearly bought indeed. That Soul which is more worth than a world, ſin hurts it. Hab. 2. 10. *thou haſt ſinned againſt thy Soul.* Sin wrongs the Soul. Prov. 8. 36. *He that ſinneth againſt me, wrongs his own Soul.* Sin brings woes upon the Soul. Iſa. 3. 9. *They declare their Sin as Sodom, they hide it not, wo unto their ſoul.* They in *Sodom* were not afraid nor aſhamed to ſin in the open ſtreet. So there are ſome among us that will Curſe and

Swear as they go along the ſtreet. They declare their Sin as *Sodom, wo unto their ſoul.* There are ſome that are ſeen drunk and ſtaggering as they go along in the ſtreet; They declare their ſin as *Sodom, wo unto their ſoul.* There are ſome that when others are by, ſo impudent are they as that they will be wanton and laſcivious in their carriage, and utter obſcene filthy words, proceeding from a more filthy heart: They declare their Sin as *Sodom, wo unto their ſoul.* Yea, Sin brings Everlaſting Wo, it brings deſtruction and ruin on the Souls of men: Sins againſt the Body are alſo againſt the Soul: *Abſtain from fleſhly luſts which war againſt the Soul*; yea, which deſtroy the ſoul. Prov. 6. 32. *He that committeth adultery with a woman, deſtroys his own ſoul.* Now what an Evil is Sin which has deſtroyed millions of Immortal Souls, which nothing elſe could hurt if it were not for ſin? Nay, one ſin, if loved and lived in will be the ruin of a Soul. Therefore the Scripture ſays, *Repent and Turn your ſelves from all your Tranſgreſſions, ſo Iniquity ſhall not de your ruin.* Ezek. 18. 30. But if there be *one ſin* perſiſted in without Repentance, that one will be the ruin of that miſerable mans Soul.

Soul. That *one sin* of Drunkenneſs, That *one sin* of Uncleanneſs, That *one sin* of an Unbridled Tongue, That *one sin* of Lying, That *one sin* of ſcandalous Coveteouſneſs, That *one sin* of unmortified Pride if not turned from, will be the Eternal Ruin of the Soul.

All theſe things Conſidered, ſurely ſin is an Evil not to be mocked at, not to be made light of. Before I proceed to the remaining *Propoſitions* for opening the Doctrine before us, we ſhall conclude at preſent with a word of *Application*. It is this, *Oh Repent of Sin.* This is that which all men are concerned to hear. Do you think that in ſuch an Aſſembly as is here this day, I will ſay nothing but what concerns a poor Condemned priſoner? Nay, but let me ſpeak that which concerns us all. The Exhortation unto Repentance doth ſo. Act. 17. 30. *God Commands all men every where to repent.* For all men have ſinned. If there is a man in this Congregation that never ſinned, Let not that man repent; but ſuch an one there is not, nor in the whole world, nor ever was there ſince *Adam*, except only *the Man Chriſt Jeſus.* As for thoſe that have repented truly and ſincerely

cerely, yet they are to renew their Repentance. Especially, if they have been guilty of backslidings from God, or have through Temptation fallen into any known Sin, it concerns them Solemnly to renew their Repentance for that particular Sin. When the Churches in *Asia* were like the Churches in *New-England*, very much degenerated, Christ from Heaven called upon them to Repent, notwithstanding they had repented many years before that. Yea, though a man should walk with never such exactness before the Lord, so as not to fall into any Sin against his Conscience for many years together; for all that he must continue repenting all his dayes. Let ungodly *Antinomians* upon whom God ha's sent strong Delusion, say and think what they please, a Christian must never cease repenting of Sin. That man who pretends to Peace & Assurance of his Justification without this, does but deceive his own Soul. He does but walk in the light of a fire which himself ha's kindled, and continuing so to dy, he shall lye down in Sorrow when repentance will be too late. Shall a man have the guilt of heinous sins upon his Soul, and shall he not carry about

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with him a *Spirit of Mourning* all his days! There is no man here, but the guilt of heinous Sins have been upon his Soul, *Adams* Sin, Original Sin, the Sin of unbelief are exceeding great Sins. Nevertheleſs, every one of us ha's been guilty of them all. They that never repented of theſe or any other Sin, how are they concerned *Now* to repent? Know therefore that you muſt either live or dy forever according as you ſhall obey this Commandment of the Goſpel. It is ſaid of the Gentiles, that God gave them *Repentance unto Life.* Act. 11. 19. So then *Life* is concerned. As for Impenitent ſinners, they are all under a ſentence of Condemnation. The Law ha's found them guilty: And *God the Judge of all* ha's Condemned them to dye Eternally. It is in vain for any Sinner in the world to think that the ſentence of Death which God ha's pronounced upon him ſhall be reverſed, or his Sins pardoned if he repent not. Yea, it is in vain for him to hope that becauſe he pretends to Faith in Chriſt his Sins ſhall be remitted. For that Faith in Chriſt which is not attended with unfaigned Repentance is no true Faith. Chriſt ha's therefore Commanded that

that *Repentance and Remiſſion of Sins ſhould be Preached in his Name.* Act. 24 47. To Preach remiſſion of Sins in the Name of Chriſt, without Preaching Repentance is to profane that Sacred Name. Oh then if ever you would have your Sins pardoned, and ſo your Souls to live for ever, Repent and turn from all your Tranſgreſſions. And therefore think ſeriouſly and ſadly of the day of Judgment. God Commands all men to repent, *becauſe he ha's appointed a day in which he will Judge the World in Righteouſneſs, by that man whom he hath ordained.* Act. 17 31. Would you have all your Secret Sins revealed in the hearing of Heaven and Earth? If you would not, repent of them all, that ſo they may be blotted out of that book where they are all written. Remember this awful word; *If thou ſhouldeſt dy with the guilt of but one Sin on thy Soul Unrepented of, at the day of Judgment thou wilt wiſh that thou haſt never been born.* And to awaken them unto repentance, let Sinners know that that great day of the Lord is near at hand. Chriſts coming to Judge the Earth is not ſo far off, as carnal hearts wiſh, and as a ſecure world does imagine. Moſt of thoſe things which the Scripture has

ha's ſaid muſt come to paſs before the Second Coming of Chriſt, are already fullfilled. And therefore that glorious day cannot be very far off. As therefore the Lord ſaid when the time was near wherein his *Evangelical Kingdom* was to be revealed. Mark 1. 15. *The time is fullfilled, and the Kingdom of God is near at hand*, Repent *and believe the Goſpel*. Thus now, many of thoſe things which the Scripture ha's foretold the accompliſhment of, are fullfilled, and the *Kingdom of Judgment is near at hand*, Repent ye therefore. Oh what a bleſſed thing would it be, if none in this numerous Aſſembly might be found amongſt the Impenitent *in that day*.

But let me direct this *Exhortation* particularly, To that Miſerable Condemned Young Creature, who is here before the Lord in this houſe this day. Poor Wretch! hearken as for thy Life and Soul. I know you have with you ſome Printed Sermons which were Preached on Occaſion of the Execution of ſome who were Condemned for the ſame bloody Crime which you are Convicted of, and muſt dye for.

Sarah Threeneedle.

Nevertheleſs, a few things let me now ſpeak to you in the Name of the Lord.

Conſider. 1. *You have been a great Sinner:* And in very Truth a great Fool. Although you are little & young in years, you are great in Wickedneſs. It is ſeldom ſeen that one ſo young as you are, ha's been guilty of ſuch Prodigious wickedneſs. You are (as I underſtand) hardly Nineteen years old, and yet ripe for a Lamentable Deſtruction as to your Body, if not as to your Soul. You are known to be guilty of Fornication and that more than once, and with more perſons than one, as young as you are: Oh horrid Shame! But beſides that, you have been guilty of Murder: Yea, and of unnatural Murder too. *Can a woman forget her Sucking Child that ſhe ſhould not have Compaſſion on the Son of her Womb?* She may, but then ſhe muſt be unnatural. And ſo monſtrouſly unnatural have you been, as not to have Compaſſion on the Son of your Womb: but to be guilty of Murdering it, whoſe blood Cryes for Vengeance againſt you, from the ground where you expoſed it to death. You have defiled the Land wherein you live. It ſhould be an humbling Conſideration to you, that all this Province of

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New-England muſt fare the worſe, and be expoſed to the wrath of Heaven if you ſhould be ſuffered to live any longer in it: for ſo does the Scripture ſpeak. Numb. 35. 31, 33. *You ſhall take no ſatisfaction for the Life of a Murderer which is guilty of blood. You ſhall not pollute the Land wherein you are, for blood it defileth the Land, and the Land can not be cleanſed of the blood which is ſhed therein, but by the blood of him that ſhed it.* Methinks you ſhould ſometimes hear the blood of your woful Infant, Crying, *Vengeance! Vengeance! Lord,* upon my unnatural Mother, who murdered me as ſoon as I came into the World. And what if you murdered its Soul as well as Body? What then do you think will come on you? Nevertheleſs as vile a Sinner as you have been.

Conſider 2. *If you go to the Lord with a truly penitent heart, God will for Chriſt ſake forgive your ſin.* This will God do, not for the ſake of your penitence, (be aſhamed and confounded thou ſinful Creature) but for the ſake of the merit of the Death of his own Son, who ſhed his Blood, that ſo the bloodieſt Sinners who penitently believe on his Name, might be pardoned and ſaved from Eternal Death.

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That Sentence of Death which is paſſed on you as to your Body, cannot be reverſed; but the Sentence of Everlaſting Death may. As yet it is poſſible that you may be ſaved from the *Second Death*. There is merit enough in the Death of Chriſt to make atonement for as great Sinners as you are. His Blood is a *Fountain ſet open for Sin and for Uncleanneſs*. Zech. 13. 1. But to whom is it ſet open? To *them that mourn* in Jeruſalem. Thy heart has been an Hell of Sin: A Sink of Uncleanneſs, but if thy heart be broken for your ſins, the opened Fountain of the Blood of Chriſt will make that horribly defiled Soul to become pure, and it ſhall live. The Lord Jeſus Chriſt excludes none from partaking in the Salvation purchaſed by the price of his Blood, becauſe they have been great Sinners. He came into the world to ſave the chief of Sinners. As great ſinners as ever lived in the world, upon their repenting and believing on his Name, have through the exceeding abundant Grace of God, had all their ſins forgiven. What black Sinners had ſome of the *Corinthians* been, before their Converſion? They had been guilty of Fornication, and beſides that of

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Unnatural Wickedneſs; but when they repented and believed on the Name of Jeſus Chriſt the only Son of God, *they were waſhed, and ſanctified, and juſtified in the Name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the Spirit of our God*: 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10, 11. *David* committed Adultery, and to hide his Sin became guilty of Murder; but upon his ſincere repentance, God *forgave the Iniquity*; that is, remitted the puniſhment of his ſin, as to that Eternal Death which his ſin deſerved. His prayer was heard, when he ſaid with a truely penitent heart, *Deliver me from blood guiltineſs, O God.* Pſal. 51. 14. What a bloody Sinner had *Manaſſeh* been? He filled the ſtreets of Jeruſalem with innocent blood; but when the Providence of God brought him into Chains (as he has done you) he humbled himſelf greatly before the Lord, and prayed unto him, and he was entreated of him. If you would do ſo, who knows but that the merciful God would look upon you? Some of thoſe Jews who were *the betrayers and murderers* of the Son of God himſelf, which was the greateſt Crime that ever men were guilty of, yet upon their repenting and believing on him whom they had with wicked hands Slain

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and Crucified, obtained through him the forgiveneſs of that, and all other ſins which they had been guilty of. Such Inſtances are recorded in the Scripture, that ſo no Sinners, (no, not the greateſt) might deſpair of finding mercy upon true Repentance towards God, and Faith in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Conſider 3. *If you dy in your ſins without Repentance, you ſhall receive no ordinary damnation*: Becauſe you have ſinned not only againſt the Law of God more heinouſly than many have done, but alſo againſt the Goſpel of Chriſt. You have refuſed to hear the Goſpel preached many a time when you might have done it. I remember one that was Executed in this Town many years ago, for the ſame Crime which you have been guilty of, and muſt dy for; Confeſſed that his neglecting to hear the Word of God, which he frequently abſented himſelf from on the Lords Days, lay as an heavy burden on his Conſcience; and ſo it ſhould do on yours. To go to Hell from under the Goſpel is a fearful thing. Since your Impriſonment, nay, ſince your Condemnation, yea, and this very day, the Salvation

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of the Gospel has been offered to you. It is an astonishing thing, that the Great God should offer a pardon and Eternal Salvation to such an one as you are; but Infinite Grace doth so. How shall you escape the sorest Damnation, if you regard not this offer of mercy. If *Indians* that never heard of the Name of Christ, commit such sins as you have done, they must go to Hell for it, but not to such a fiery place there as you shall, because of your disobedience to the Calls of the Gospel. It will be more tolerable for *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* at the Day of Judgment, then for the despisers of the Gospel, and of the Grace of God. Mat. 10. 14, 15.

Consider 4. *Within a few dayes you will be in Eternity, and then Repentance will be too late.* Within a few dayes you will be gone down into the Pit, and *they that go down into the pit, cannot hope for Gods Truth.* When once your Soul is separated from your Body, *there is a Gulf fixed:* It is fixed in a Gulf of Eternity, and that is a *great Gulf* indeed. Within a few minutes after your Soul is out of your Body, you will know where you must be throughout Eternal Ages. If Death find you a penitent

tent Believer, as ſoon as ever your Soul is out of your Body, Holy Angels will carry it to a better World than this is; but if otherwiſe, cruel Devils will go with it to a place of torment; and there muſt it remain until the General Reſurrection, when Soul and Body ſhall appear before the Judgment Seat of Chriſt, you muſt be tryed and judged over again *in that day*, when all your ſecret ſins will be laid open before Angels and men. The man (Chriſt Jeſus the Son of God) whom God has ordained to be the Judge of the whole World, will then Sentence you to Death, yea, to be Burnt to death. Thou thinkeſt it is a ſad thing (and ſo it is) that you are Sentenced to be hanged to death; but Oh! what will it be when the Son of God ſhall doom thee to Eternal Fire, and Command his Holy Angels to ſee Execution done upon thee accordingly. They will caſt thee, Body and Soul into the Fire. Doſt thou not remember how *Dives* cryed out being in Hell and in Torments, O for a *drop of water to cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame.* Woful Wretch! As thou haſt ſinned with thy Body, ſo muſt thy Body as well as thy Soul burn for it. Thoſe bloody hands which

which have murdered thy child muſt be in torments. That wicked tongne which has told many a ly, muſt be in torment; yea, thy whole Body muſt be caſt into Hell. And how long muſt you be in this miſery. After thou haſt been in that Fire as many millions of Ages as there are ſands on the Sea ſhore, thou ſhalt be no nearer to an end of it, then thou waſt the firſt hour that it came upon thee. *This! This!* will be thy portion as ſure as this Bible is the Word of God, if thou dyeſt an impenitent, Unbelieving Creature. Oh! Conſider of it. Some words of Counſel, Let me ſet before you.

1. *Endeavour that your Sorrow for Sin may be a Godly Sorrow.* For Godly Sorrow works Repentance which is unto Salvation. 2 *Cor.* 7. 10. Do not mourn for Sin, only becauſe you have hurt your ſelf by being ſuch a Fool. You have diſgraced your ſelf, and ruined your ſelf. Or, becauſe you have brought diſhoncur upon all your Relations, and in a ſpecial manner on your Parents. That ſhould indeed be an heart breaking thought unto you: but moſt of all you ſhould mourn for Sin, becauſe thereby you have diſho-

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noured the Name, and grieved the Spirit of God.

2. *Do not persist in any Sin.* It is not confessing but forsaking Sin that will prove you to be a true penitent. Turn from all sin. Stand not in any Lye. I charge you before God, and as you will answer it at the peril of your Soul, that you neither clear any guilty, nor accuse any Innocent person of committing Folly with you. I speak this the rather because you have accused one who not only denies what you have charged him with, but ha's appealed to God concerning his Innocency. Having done so, in case he should be guilty, I am perswaded the waters of Jealousy will come into his Bowels, and like Oyl into his Bones. God who will not hold them guiltless that take his Name in Vain, useth to make those that Tempt him to shew his Omniscience by appealing to Him when they know themselves guilty, to become awful Examples of Divine Vengeance. But I am willing to hope better things, and if there be nothing against him besides the accusation of so Wicked and Lying a Creature as you have been, there is no sufficient reason for uncharitable thoughts. If then you

you have accuſed him falſly, you can never make him amends for the wrong you have done to him: And if you perſiſt in a falſe accuſation you deſtroy your own Soul. It is impoſſible that you ſhould be Saved if you do ſo. Will you go out of the world with a Lye in your mouth, as *Ananias* and *Sapphira* did? Would you have your Soul to go to be where their Souls are? Inſtead of perſiſting in any ſin, do what in you lyeth, that God may have Glory. The penitent Thief on the Croſs, in the little Time that he lived after his Condemnation, brought much honour to the Name of God, and of Jeſus Chriſt. Oh that you would endeavour to do ſo. And therefore warn others to beware of thoſe ſins which have brought you to this. You ſay that you believe your Diſobedience to your Parents ha's provoked God thus to leave you. Truly Diſobedience to Parents is an unnatural wickedneſs. It may very well be that as a puniſhment for it, you have been left to that unnatural Murder, for which now you muſt dy. But caution others againſt that ſin. And do you Children and young perſons hearken to this. Here is before your eyes, a poor young Creature,

come

come to a miſerable End: And ſhe ſaith, her Undutiful Carriage towards her Father and Mother, has provoked God thus to cut her down out of time. And will you then dare to be Undutiful Children! If you love your Lives, make conſcience of the Fifth Commandment, and let there be none found among you that ſhall ſet light by Father and Mother.

3. *Go to Jeſus Chriſt.* If you cannot go to him *with* a penitent heart, go to him *for* one. *Him has God Exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour to give Repentance unto Iſrael and forgiveneſs of Sins.* Act. 5. 3 Oh Pray and Cry to him: Pray him to pour his Blood on thy Soul: That will break the Rockieſt heart, the moſt *Adamantine* heart in the world. Pray as *David* did. Pſal 51. 2 *Waſh me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanſe me from my Sin. Purge me with Hyſop and I ſhall be clean.* Thus does he pray that his Soul might be waſhed in the blood of Chriſt. And have not you need to pray after the ſame manner? If that precious blood be ſprinkled on you, then notwithſtanding your ſins have been as Scarlet and red like Crimſon they ſhall be as white as Snow.

SERMON

SERMON II.

PROPOSITION. II.

THERE *are some, yea many who make light of Sin.* Notwithstanding Sin is such an evil as has been declared, and they that make a light matter of being guilty of it, shew themselves to be Fools, the world is full of such Fools. This will appear, if we consider who they are that do thus.

1. *They that have little or no remorse for Sin.* Who lay not sin to heart when Committed either by themselves or others. An instance hereof we have in *Josephs* then ungodly Brethren, who after they had thrown him into the pit, it is noted concerning them that *they Sat down to eat bread.* Gen. 37. 25. Intimating that they had little sence of the evil they had done. They were not grieved for the Affliction of *Joseph*, nor yet for their own sin in the wrong they had done him. Had they had a due sence thereof, they would have had little heart to eat bread. There are

few in the world that lay ſin to heart as they ſhould do. The Prophet complained that there were in a manner none. Jer. 8. 6. *I hearkned and heard, but no man repented of his wickedneſs, ſaying what have I done.* There are great ſins, which but few have a due ſence of their guiltineſs before God in reſpect of them. *Adams Sin* was a great one: An hainous tranſgreſſion is expreſſed, by ſaying, *Like Adam they have tranſgreſſed the Covenant.* Hoſ. 6. 7. He ſinned againſt a poſitive Expreſs Commandment to the contrary. *Haſt thou Eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou ſhouldeſt not eat,* ſaid God unto him. So that he ſinned againſt knowledge. Wherefore, ſinning againſt knowledge, is called a ſinning *after the Similitude of Adams tranſgreſſion.* Rom. 5. 14. There was horrid unbelief in that ſin. *Adam* gave more credit to the Devil in the Serpent who ſaid, *you ſhall not ſurely Dy,* than to the God of Truth, who ſaid, *you ſurely ſhall.* There was intolerable Pride & Diſcontent in that ſin. When God his Maker had made him Lord over all the Creatures on the face of the Earth, he was not ſatisfyed with that, but aſpired to be a God too. There was Sacrilegious ingratitude in that ſin of *Adam,* ſince when God

God had been so bountiful as to give him free leave to eat of all the Trees in *Eden* excepting one, he would be Stealing that too. Yet this grievous sin is by a Righteous *Imputation* the sin of every man. The Papists say of their *Bonaventure*, *In hoc homine non peccavit Adam*, that he had no guilt of *Adams* sin upon him. But the Apostle tells us, that *in Adam all have sinned*, Rom. 5. 12. Yet how few are there that have any sence of their guiltiness on this account of this great iniquity? Or, that did ever mourn before the Lord for it? That which we commonly (from *Austin* who first and fitly gave it that Name) call *Original Sin*, or (as the Apostle expresseth it) *the Sin which dwells in us*, is no little evil. That corruption of nature which men bring into the world with them, is evil beyond all expression. The Apostle sayes that *Sin taking Occasion by the Commandment wrought in him all manner of Concupiscence*. Rom. 7. 8. Such wickedness is there in the nature of men, that because the Commandment sayes, you shall not do such a thing, they are the more set upon doing it. Actual sins are only the filthy streams which proceed from that corrupt fountain of Original Sin. The

Scripture ſpeaks of the *Exceeding Sinfulneſs* of that ſin. Rom. 7. 13. It is *Sinful Sin.* It is impoſſible to call it by a worſe name than it ſelf, or to give it a worſe *Epithite*, than that of *Sinful.* Yet how do men make light of this ſin? Jews and Papiſts in their writings will hardly own it to be a ſin. And there are many who never did ſhed one tear, or ſend one ſigh up to Heaven, becauſe of the guiltineſs of their Souls before the Lord, by their Original Corruption. The ſin of unbelief or diſobedience to the Goſpel is a great ſin. The Spirit of God will one day *Convince the world of Sin*, that is to ſay, Convince them that they have been guilty of a great and hainous ſin, *becauſe they have not believed on Chriſt.* Joh 16. 9. Diſobedience to the Goſpel is a greater evil than diſobedience to the Law, and will be followed with a ſeverer Judgment at laſt. Heb 12. 28, 29. *He that deſpiſed Moſes Law dyed without Mercy: of how much ſorer puniſhment ſuppoſe you, he ſhall be thought worthy that has trampled under foot the Son of God.* The unbeliever has done ſo. A vile Luſt has been more eſteemed by him, than the Son of God himſelf. Yet how few are there, that have bewailed their guiltineſs before

before the Lord by reaſon of this ſin? There is no man that has not been guilty of numberleſs Actual Sins. *David* was ſenſible of this: he ſaw his ſins were like a mighty Army which he could not ſee to the end of them, and *his heart failed him*, he was ready to dy away at the ſight of them. Pſal 40. 12. To the ſame purpoſe *Ezra*, and others of the Lords Servants. Ezr. 9. 6. *Iniquities are increaſed over our heads.* They had more ſins than there are drops of water in a deep river enough to drown them: *And our treſpaſs is gone up unto the Heavens* An heap of Sand which ſhall reach as high as the Heavens, muſt have an infinite number of Sands in it: So is every man guilty of an Infinite number of ſins. But how few are ſenſible of this? Men do not mourn for their own ſins, much leſs for the ſins of others. The holy Apoſtle reproveth the *Corinthians* in that when one in their Communion was found guilty of Inceſt, *they had not Mourned.* 1 Cor. 5. 2. They would have done well to have ſet ſome time apart to Faſt and Mourn becauſe of the diſhonour done to the Name of Chriſt, and the wound which Religion received by means of that Scandalous perſon. The

Psalmist could say, not only that he *beheld the Transgressors and was grieved*, but that *Rivers of waters run down his Eyes because men kept not the Law of God.* Psal. 119. 136. How few can say after him?

2. *They that seek to Excuse and Extenuate Sin, make too light of it.* Thus our first Parents did. The woman who was first in the Transgression, would lay the blame at the Serpents door: *The Serpent beguiled me.* Thus *Eves* Children think to Excuse or Extenuate their sin by laying the fault on the Devil. Why would you do such an evil thing? The Devil Tempted me say they. The man sought to make some excuse for himself by accusing his Wife, & silently reflected on the providence of God, *The woman whom thou gavest me she gave to me of the Tree and I did eat.* Gen. 3. 12. Thus sinners to Extenuate their Crimes will reflect upon God: They say, If God had given me Grace, I should not have done so wickedly. Ever since *Adams fall* it has been natural for men to excuse and extenuate their faults either by blaming others, or by some other pretext. When *Aaron* committed a great Sin in making the Calfe in the Wilderness, what a frivolous excuse did he make for himself,

ſelf, that the people brought him ſome Gold, and he caſt it into the fire, *and there came out a Calfe.* Exod. 32. 24. As if it had been only by *Chance* and not of *Choice* that a thing like a Calfe came out of the fire. The Jewiſh *Rabbis* in their writings excuſe that fact of *Aaron*, pretending that he deſigned not to make ſuch an Idol, but that there was an Extraordinary operation of the Devil in that matter; but this fiction of theirs is againſt the Scripture, which declares the activity of *Aaron* in the forming of that Idol. *Verſe* 4. *He faſhioned it with a graving tool*: but then he had another excuſe to leſſen his Crime. *Verſe* 22. *Thou knoweſt the people they are ſet on miſchief*: he would lay all the fault at their door. If a good man, a *Saint of the Lord*, as *Aaron* was, will when under Temptation find excuſes for great ſins, will not ſinners do ſo much more? We read concerning *Saul*, when he ſpared *Agag* & the *Amalakites* ſubſtance, contrary to the Expreſs Commandment of God, he endeavoured to extenuate his Crime, by pretending that he was afraid to diſpleaſe the people. 1 *Sam.* 15. 24. *I have tranſgreſſed the Commandment of the Lord, becauſe I feared the people, and obeyed their voice.* And he

had another excuse, *viz. that the best of the sheep and of the oxen were spared for Sacrifice unto the Lord.* vers. 15. Thus men think to extenuate the evil of their sin, by pretending that they intended no hurt in what they did: But Sin is such an Evil, as the best intention in the world can never make it to be good. Others think to excuse what they have done amiss, by pretending that if it were sin, yet it was no great sin. *Ephraim* said, *they shall find no iniquity in me that were sin.* Hos. 12. 8. He means, no Iniquity that were a great sin. Nevertheless, *he loved to Oppress*; but thought that such Oppression as that which the Prophets charged him with, was no such great sin. Men are apt to say of their sins, as *Lot* said of *Zoar*, Gen. 19. 20. *Is it a little One? Is it not a little One?* They call their sins *peccadillo's*; whereas no sin can be so absolutely considered. Altho some sins compared with others are small, nevertheless, that which is (as the least sin is) an offence against the Infinite Majesty, cannot be a little Evil. Papists have invented distinctions to make their sins appear little. Some are *venial* they say, and not *mortal*; so they distinguish Lies into *pernicious* and *officious*. As if to

tell

tell a Ly to do a Neighbour a kindneſs, were no evil. But the Scripture teacheth us better. Rom. 3. 8. we may not *do evil that good may come of it.* When that Caſe was propoſed to *Auſtin*, whether a man might not tell a Ly, if he could thereby ſave his friends Life, he anſwered, No, by no means. *Nay*, (ſaid he) *if it were poſſible for thee to ſave the Soul of thy friend by telling a Ly for it, thou mayſt not do it.* And though this may ſeem levere, it is ſound Doctrine. For no man can tell a Ly without diſhonouring God, by ſinning againſt him: And it were better that any man in the world ſhould periſh, then that God ſhould be diſhonoured.

3. *They that juſtifie themſelves or others in ſin, make too light of it.* To juſtifie and patronize evil deeds, or evil perſons, is worſe then only to extenuate what has been amiſs. It is therefore ſaid, that *he that juſtifies the wicked is an abomination to the Lord.* Prov. 17. 15. If a man knows another to be wicked, and ſhall then and therefore juſtify him, he is an abomination to the Lord. Nevertheleſs, a good man being under temptation may juſtifie himſelf when he has erred greatly. So did *Jacob*, when it was ſaid to him, *doſt*

thou do well to be angry? He replied, *I do well to be angry even unto death.* Whereas he had no juſt reaſon at all to be angry, much leſs even *unto death*, that is as long as he lived. But they are ill men who will juſtifie themſelves or others in ſcandalous ſins. Iſa. 5. 20 *Wo unto them that call evil good, and good evil, that put darkneſs for light, and light for darkneſs, that put bitter for ſweet, and ſweet for bitter.* They that ſtand to vindicate ſcandalous evils againſt the expreſs Word of God, do ſo. Thus did *Saul*, for which cauſe *Samuel* charged him with Rebellion and Stubbornneſs. 1 *Sam.* 15.23. He ſinned againſt the expreſs Commandment of God, and that was *Rebellion.* He ſtood to juſtifie himſelf, ſaying, he had not ſinned, but done as he ought to do; and this was *Stubbornneſs.* The like Stubbornneſs we ſee in *Dathan* and *Abiram*, of whom it is recorded *that they came out and ſtood at the door of their tents.* Numb. 16. 27. which was boldly to declare that they would ſtand to what they had done. They had ſinned and provoked the Lord exceedingly, by abuſing the two beſt men in the world. They had reviled *Moſes* and *Aaron*, and now would impudently come out and

and ſtand at their doors, to ſignifie that they would ſtand to what they had done in villifying thoſe Eminent Servants of God; ſo light did they make of that their ſin. There are thoſe that will *plead for Baal.* There are none ſo bad, but ſome or other will plead for them; yea, tho' they have been guilty of Murder it ſelf. There are thoſe that are not afraid nor aſhamed openly to avow the vileſt Opinions, and the lewdeſt practices: The Church of *Rome* does ſo. And therefore 'tis ſaid, that *on her forehead* is a name written, *The Mother of Harlots.* Rev. 17. 5. They are not aſhamed to juſtifie Idolatries. They are not aſhamed to maintain that for their *Eccleſiaſticks*, to marry is a ſin, but for them to have Concubines is no ſin. In *Rome* it ſelf, filthy harlots are openly tolerated: Thus on her forehead is written the Mother of Harlots. It was ſaid to the Apoſtate Church of *Iſrael, thou haſt an Whores Forehead.* Jer. 3. 3. becauſe they did juſtify themſelves in great Impieties; like lewd Harlots, who are not aſhamed of the vileſt Abominations. Alas! that there are men and women in the world ſo far degenerated, not only from righteous, but from rational Creatures, as not to be aſhamed

of

of their living and doing more like brutes than men; of such does the Prophet speak, Jer. 6. 15. *Were they ashamed when they had committed Abomination? They were not ashamed, nor would they at all blush.* And do not such fools make a mock at sin?

4. *They that take pleasure in sin make too light of it.* There are wretched Creatures that Sin is their delight. Prov. 15. 21. *Folly is a joy* to him that is destitute of Understanding: They rejoyce in Iniquity: It is their chief delight. Prov. 4. 16. *They eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence.* They take as much pleasure in sin as an *Epicure* does in feasting: Hence they have greedy appetites after sin, as in vers. 16. *They cannot sleep except they cause some to fall.* An hungry man can't sleep until he has eat something; no more can they until they have accomplished their wicked desires. There is no wicked man, but some sin or other is sweet unto him. *He keeps it under his tongue, he spares it, and forsakes it not, it is sweet in his mouth.* Job 20. 12, 13. which is a sign of an Hypocrite. A sincere Child of God may fall into sin, but he does not love to do so: Sheep may fall into the mire, but they do not love to be there.

They

They are Swine and not Sheep, that love to be wallowing in the mire of their Iniquities: They are in a ſtate of damnation. 2 Theſ. 2. 12. *They all ſhall be damned that take pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs.* Nevertheleſs, thus it is with many: There are ſome that will boaſt and brag of their Impieties, like bloody *Doeg.* Pſal. 52. 1. *Why boaſteth thou thy ſelf in miſchief, O mighty man.* When he had ſhed the Innocent Blood of ſome unarmed men, he boaſted of his being a mighty valourous man; he would then brag of his Loyalty, as if he did a great matter to confirm the Crown on *Sauls* head. There are that will brag of thoſe things, of which they ought to be aſhamed. Phil. 3. 19. *whoſe glory is their ſhame.* They will glory and boaſt of their being drunk, or wanton, or of their lying and cheating. Nay, ſome are ſo wicked, as to brag of their committing abominations which they did not commit. Prov. 10. 23. *It is a ſport to a fool to do miſchief*; or (as the Hebrew word imports) *to do very wickedly.* There are who will ſpeak of what ſins they have been guilty of, and then laugh at it, and make others laugh with them. It may be they will tell of the ſins and follies of their

youth:

youth to make ſport. How unlike are ſuch unto *David*, who prayed that God would not remember the ſins of his youth. *Pſal.* 25. 7. And yet he had as unſtained a youth as moſt in the world. He feared the Lord from his youth; nevertheleſs could remember ſome ſins and vanities of his youth; & a ſorrowful (not a pleaſant) remembrance it was to him. He would not tell of the vanities of his youth to make others merry. There are ſome that take pleaſure in ſeeing others ſin; which argues an high degree of Impiety. Rom. 1. 32. *They not only do things worthy of death, but take pleaſure in them that do them.* Yea, there are that when they cannot commit ſin themſelves, delight in ſeeing others do it; which is perfect *Diaboliſm.* The Devils are not drunk themſelves, nor do they commit Adultery, being Spirits and not Bodies, they are not capable of committing thoſe ſins, but they take pleaſure in ſeeing men commit thoſe ſins. If there be any pleaſure in Hell that is it.

5. *They that cauſe others to ſin, make light of it.* As if the burden of their own ſins were too light for them, and therefore they muſt contract the guilt of other mens Iniquities. Thus did *Jeroboam* the Son of *Nebat*,

Nebat, He made Israel to sin. And so did *Rehoboam, He forsook the Lord, and all Israel with him.* 2 *Chron.* 12. 1. One may cause others to sin, by requiring them to do it. Thus *Absalom* caused his Servants to become guilty of Murdering his Brother *Amnon.* He said to his Servants, smite him, kill him, *Have not I commanded you?* 2 Sam. 13. 28. So *Jezebel* wrote a Letter in the Kings Name to the Elders in the City of *Jezrael,* who she knew would do any thing the King and Court would have them do, requiring them to take away the Innocent Life of *Naboth,* by a form of Law, and under a pretence of Executing Justice on a Traytor: One may cause another to sin by instigating them thereunto. *Ahab* sold himself to work wickedness, *whom Jezabel his Wife Stirred up.* 1 King. 21. 25. Or, by giving bad Counsil: It is said concerning *Ahaziah,* that his Mother was his Counseller to do *Wickedly.* 2 Chron. 22 3. Or by Teaching them how they may accomplish any evil design. So *Jonadab* became guilty of *Amnons* Incest, by giving him subtile Counsil how he might Compass his wicked desires. 2 *Sam.* 13. 2, 3. So again, one may cause others to sin by perswading & enticing

enticing them thereto. Prov. 1. 10. *My Son if sinners entice thee consent thou not.* Thus young people do often draw one another into the Snares of Sin and Death by perswasions: Come (sayes a vile Companion) lets go to such an house, There we shall find what we would have: By this means a silly Creature is drawn into the sin of Drunkenness, Idleness, and it may be into worse wickedness. Most certainly they know not what a dreadful thing the guilt of sin is, that are thus willing to have not only their own, but other mens sins to Answer for in the great day of Judgment. It may be the Conscience of sinners which is now asleep will awake and roar upon them ere long, perhaps on a death bed, and then they will be in anguish to think how they have made others to sin. There was lately a remarkable instance of this in a person of Quality *Sir Duncomb Colchester*, a Gentleman in *Glocestershire*, who had drawn many into intemperance and other sins, but it pleased God by visiting him with Sickness on his body to shew him his transgressions that they had exceeded, and then he could not be at rest in his Spirit, until he had caused a writting to be publickly read

read in the Congregation, Solemnly warning all others that ſhould hear of it not to do as he had done in making others to drink to exceſs, or in other reſpects to Sin againſt God: ſoon after which warning he dyed, about four years ſince.

6. *They that mock and deride at thoſe who reprove them for their Sins, make a mock at Sin.* There are ſuch: If a Neighbour reproveth them, it may be they will jeer him to his face, or when he is gone they will report what he ſaid, and deride him for it: Or, if a Relation, nay a Father reprove them, they'l but make a may game of all. When *Lot* adviſed his Sons in Law of the imminent danger of deſtruction which was hanging over their heads, he was to them as one that mocked. *Gen.* 19. 14. They hardly thought he was in earneſt: What the Town be deſtroyed within ſuch a time, Thats a Jeſt indeed! They thought he did either dote or dream. Thus when Parents warn their Children of that Everlaſting deſtruction which is near unto them, they account it little leſs than dotage in them. Nay, ſome will deride at Miniſters of God for their Sermons. 2 Chron. 36 16. *They mocked the Meſſengers of God, and deſpiſed his words.*

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Instead of trembling before the Threatnings of the word of God, they did but mock at them. Therefore did the prophet say, *be not ye mockers lest your bands be made strong.* Isa. 28. 21, 22. There are some that have a form of Godliness, but are enemies to the power of it; if Christ himself should Preach to them, and warn them against their particular beloved sins, they would deride at the Sermon. Luke 16. 14. *The Pharisees who were covetous derided him.* When the Lord told them of the danger their Souls were in by Covetousness, which was their particular and beloved Sin, they did *blow their Noses* (as the Greek word there used signifyeth) at what they heard, *i. e.* they entertained it with the greatest Contempt and Scorn.

7. *There are some who take pains to do wickedly.* Of such does the Prophet speak. Isa. 5. 18. *Wo unto them that draw iniquity with Cords of Vanity* When men do not only set their wits on work to make vain excuses for Sin, but are at a great deal of labour and toyle for their compassing of their evil designs, they draw iniquity with Cords of Vanity, *and Sin as it were with Cartropes.* Traces are made unto which Cart-

Cartropes are fastned and beasts put forth their strength in drawing the Cart with them: Such beasts are some Sinners; they Sin with all their might. When they are about a Sinful work they will do it with both hands. Mic. 7. 3. *They do evil with both hands earnestly.* They will sit up late and rise early in the Service of Sin: they are intent upon nothing so much as how they may accomplish their Sinful desires. There is many a Sinner that if he would but be as industrious and diligent in Serving God as he is in Serving Sin and the Devil, he would be an happy man forever. It was a doleful and dreadful word which Cardinal *Woodlsey* uttered not long before he dyed miserably, *That if he had been but as faithful and diligent in Serving God as he had been in Serving the Kings Interest, God would not have cast him off in his old age as that King did.* Alas! the practice of many Sinners, is, as if they thought they could not go to Hell fast enough, nor get there soon enough: Such mockers at Sin, and such fools are they.

We proceed therefore unto,

PROPOSITION. III.

That Sinners are Fools. The things which have

have been ſpoken prove them to be ſo. None but Fools would make a light matter of ſuch an Evil as Sin is. But further to inlarge on the *Probation* of the Truth before us.

1. The Scripture every where ſpeaks of Sinners as of Fools. How often are they in the Holy Writings, (in the Book of *Job*, and in the *Pſalms*, and in *Proverbs*, and *Eccleſiaſtes*) called *fools*. The Scripture ſays of them that they are *fooliſh*. Pſal. 5. 4. *The fooliſh, i. e.* Sinners *ſhall not ſtand in thy ſight*. When they come to be tryed for their lives before Gods Tribunal, they will not be able to ſtand in the judgment. The Hebrew word *HOLEPIM*, there Tranſlated *fooliſh*, ſignifieth *mad men*, or ſuch as rave with folly; Sinners are ſubject to *moral madneſs*: If they were not raving mad they would never do as they do. Madneſs is in their hearts as long as they live, and after that they go to the dead, nay, to the damned. Sinners are ſaid to be without knowledge. Pſal. 14. 4. *Have all the workers of Iniquity no knowledge.* Truly, there is not one of them all that has any ſaving knowledge; ſuch of them as are wiſe to do evil, to do good they have no knowledge. Iſa. 27. 11. *It is a*

people

people of no underſtanding. They are called *ſimple ones*. Prov. 1. 22. *How long ye ſimple ones will ye love ſimplicity*. Hence the Scripture compares them to Beaſts, becauſe they act as if they were devoid of all reaſon or rational underſtanding. Pſal. 49. 10. *Wiſe men dy, likewiſe the brutiſh perſon*: Who but a Sinner is that *brutiſh perſon*? A Sinner is reſembled to the moſt ſtupid of all Beaſts; To the Aſs, to the wild Aſs, nay, to the wild aſſes colt. Job 11. 12. *Man is born like the wild aſſes colt*. A Sinner is a born fool. They are compared to the ſilly Birds, to ſimple fearful Doves. Hoſ. 7. 11. *Ephraim is like a ſilly Dove without heart*. Yea, they are compared to Oſtriches. Lam. 4. 3. The Oſtrich is both a very fooliſh and an unnatural Bird. Job 39. 16, 17. *She is hardned againſt her young ones as though they were not hers becauſe God has deprived her of wiſdom, neither has he impartd to her underſtanding*. Such an Oſtrich has the Condemned Priſoner (who was here the laſt Lords day) been. She has been hardned againſt her young one, as if it had not been hers. Yea, though it was crushed to death ſhe regarded it not. True ſpiritual wiſdom and underſtanding is in fearing the Lord, which is contrary

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to sinning against him. Psal. 111. 10. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and a good understanding have all they that do his Commandments.* As for Regenerate Souls, God has made them to know wisdom in the inward parts. They that are wise unto Salvation are wise indeed; and therefore Godly men are the only wise men, and will be found to be so at last. Yea, wiser than the greatest Clerks or Politicians in the world, that have not Grace in their hearts. A man may excel in political wisdom, and in philosophical wisdom, and yet a poor illeterate obscure person, that makes no figure in the world, but Loveth and Serveth God and Jesus Christ, will be found a wiser man than the other, because of his being wise unto Salvation; which is the only true wisdom. It is related concerning two Learned men, that as they were Travelling to the Council of *Trent*, they espied a poor Shepherd in the Woods, with Tears running down his Cheeks. They asked him the reason of his weeping, who replied, you may see there an ugly Toad: I cannot but weep, to think of the goodness of God towards me, who instead of making me a Toad, has made me a man with a rational Soul, capable

capable to know, and love, and serve God. At this the two Learned men fell a weeping too, saying to one another, this poor illeterate Shepherd will go to Heaven when he dyeth; for he loveth God and serveth him; but we with all our Learning are like to go to Hell: He is an happier and wiser man than we are. So then there is no Sinner in the world that is a wise man, if we speak of true heavenly wisdom. For,

2. Sin is the greatest Folly. Psal 85. 8. *Let them not turn again to folly, i. e.* to Sin. Prov. 8. 11. *As a dog returns to his vomit, so a fool returns to his folly.* A Dog has not the reason to consider and think with himself, that the thing which he vomics up, was it which made him sick, & therefore he returns to it again. Just so it is with Sinners. It may be they have felt pain by their sins, their Bodies have been hurt thereby: And it may be their Consciences have smarted for what they have done; yet they will commit those Sins again. Thus do they return to their folly. Such fools are they. All Sin is folly: For it is against the rules of wisdom: All the Precepts contained in the Law or Word of God are wise precepts. There

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is no Sin but it is a Transgression of one or other of them. Jer. 8. 8, 9. *How do you say, we are wise? They have rejected the Word of the Lord, and what wisdom is in them?* Sin is a departure from God the fountain of all wisdom: And therefore the more men sin, the more unwise are they. The greatest Sinners are the greatest fools in the world. *In the greatness of their folly they go astray.* Prov. 5. 23. And as all Sin is folly, so there are some Sins which are in a most peculiar manner so. Sins of Uncleanness are most abominable folly. When *Shechem* had defiled *Dinah*, it was said of him, that he had *wrought folly in Israel, which thing ought not to be done* Gen. 34. 7. Sins of that nature bruitify men. They are more like bruit beasts than like men with rational Souls. The wise man speaketh of a young man that was observed to go to the house of an Harlot, there to debauch himself, of whom he giveth this character, that he was *a young man void of understanding, and that he went after her, as an Ox goeth to the Slaughter, and as a Fool goeth to the correction of the Stocks* Prov. 7. 7, 22. Such bruitish folly are such Sinners guilty of.

3 A Sinner has all the properties of

a Fool belonging to him: he that has all the properties of a Fool is one. That property which the Text before us ſpeaks of is enough to prove the Sinner to be a Fool if there were nothing more. A Fool will laugh and make himſelf merry with that which is matter of grief and ſorrow. And do not Sinners do ſo, like mad Fools. Prov. 26. 18. *As a mad man who caſteth fire brands, arrows, and death, ſo is the man that deceiveth his Neighbour and ſayes, am not I in ſport?* A mad man will throw whatever comes next to hand, though it be a Fire brand, or a dart, or any thing elſe that ſhall cauſe death, and makes ſport of it: If he wounds his Neighbour for which he ought to be grieved, that is a ſport to him. And thus it is with ſome mad Sinners: They will deviſe ſlanderous Lyes of their Neighbour to the wounding of his reputation, and then ſay, they did but Jeaſt. The good Companion ſhip of rude Sinners, is (as one expreſſeth it) no better than *Horſe play*: They will ſtrike one another. When they are in their drink, and in their mad frolicks, they will tell of one anothers Secret ſins, and ſo expoſe their Neighbour to reproach & ſhame: And this is their ſport. Mad

People will sometimes when the phrenzy takes them kill their own Relations, and (though they have cause to mourn for what they have done all their dayes) they rejoyce in it. We are informed of a Tragical instance of this nature which hapned in a place in *Wales* not five Months ago. A distracted man in a mad fit killed his Wife and all his four Children in one bloody morning, without any remorse for what he had done. Another sad instance there is in this Land in a neighbour Colony: A poor woman now in Prison, cut the throat of her own Son, at which she rejoyceth, imagining that she has notably imitated the Faith of *Abraham* in Sacrificing her Son A mad man will sometimes cut and wound his own body, and then Laugh at his own misery. And do not distracted Sinners do thus and worse than this? They gash and wound their own Souls by their Sins, and yet laugh at what they have done. It is impossible for a man to make himself Drunk, or Unclean, or to tell a known Lye, without making a wound in his Conscience, which he will be sensible of whenever he shall come to himself and see his undone Soul bleeding to death. But at present they may mock

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at their own misery, which declares their folly and madness. Besides this which is expressed in the Text before us, there are other properties of a Fool to be affirmed of him that is a Sinner. *e. g.*

1. Indocibility is the property of a Fool. He is unteachable: Suppose he should have the best Instructors in the world, he will not learn wisdom, nor get understanding. The Sinners amongst the Jews had Prophets to Instruct them, and yet they would not Learn. Isa. 28. 13. *The word of the Lord was unto them Precept upon Precept, Line upon Line, here a little and there a little.* God dealt with them as we do with Children that must learn first one line & then another, and but a little at a time. And for all that, they would learn nothing: They were ever Learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the Truth; so unteachable were they. If a Fool be Corrected as well as Instructed, yet he will not learn. There is no beating of knowledge into him: And is it not so with Sinners? There is many a Sinner that has smarted for his sin & folly, & yet he has not the sence to reform his wayes. Many a drunkard that has suffered much in his Estate, and in his Relations, and in

his Soul and Body, because of that sin, and for all that, he has neither the Grace nor Wit to leave that sin: Though he has been stricken and beaten for it, he will seek it yet again. *Prov.*23.35. What a Fool is such a sinner? We see every day that what the wise man speaks is true. Prov.27. 22. *Though thou shouldst bray a Fool in a Morter with a Pestle yet will not his foolishness depart from him.* In old Time one kind of grinding which people used was to put their parched Corn into a Morter, and so to grind it to powder. The grains of Corn tho' much hardned, would by a Pestle beating it in the Morter be reduced to soft Meal; but a Sinner is such an hard hearted Fool, that though the plagues of the Lord be never so heavy upon him, he will not amend nor leave his folly. Let him be put into the Morter of Divine wrath, and bruised with the Iron Pestle of Judgments one after another, he is and will be foolish still. Though the Lord has stricken him, he receiveth not Correction, his heart is harder than a Rock, he refuseth to return. Would any one but a Fool be thus obstinate?

2. It is the property of a Fool to mind only what is present, but to be careless of what

what ſhall be hereafter. A wiſe man will lay up a good foundation againſt the Time to come: he'l provide againſt a rainy day. Prov. 10. 5. *He that gathereth in Summer is a wiſe Son.* He that is wiſe will in Summer provide againſt Winter. It is ſaid of the Ants that they are exceeding wiſe, *becauſe they prepare their meat in the Summer.* Prov. 30. 25. Alas! Sinners have not this wiſdom. They are like beaſts without reaſon who only indulge their preſent ſenſes, but have no thoughts where they muſt be, or how they ſhall live a few years hence. If men were wiſe they would be often thinking of another world. They would prepare for Death, and provide for Eternity. Deut. 32. 29. *O that they were wiſe that they underſtood this, that they would Conſider their latter end.* They that are wiſe will conſider their latter end. They will remember Death & Eternity. Why are ſome of the Virgins in the Parable called *Fooliſh Virgins*, but becauſe they did not take care to get *Oil into their Veſſels*, Grace into their hearts, and ſo be provided and prepared for the day of the Lords coming? There is no ſinner in this world, but he muſt ſhortly go out of it, and go into another world where he muſt be for

ever and ever: And yet he remains unprepared and unprovided for that world. What inexpreſſible folly is this? I remember a Reverend Author ſpeaks concerning a certain noble man that had a Servant belonging to his Family that was counted a Fool, 'to whom he delivered 'a Staff and bid him keep that Staff until 'he ſhould meet with one that was more 'Fool than himſelf, and give it to that 'man: Within a while his Lord fell ſick 'unto Death: His Fool ſervant comes to 'him, and ſayes, what are you dying? 'Yes, ſayes his Lord: And whither are 'you going? Into another world ſayes 'he: And when will you come again ſays 'his Fool to him, a Month hence, or a 'year hence, or how long firſt: I muſt 'never come again, ſays his Maſter, and 'I ſhall never ſee thee any more. And '(ſaid the Servant) have you made any 'proviſion for that world which you are 'going into, never to come here again? 'No, ſaid his Lord, I have not: No (ſaid 'the poor Fool) then I'le give you your 'Staff again, for I my ſelf was never more 'Fool then ſo: Not to think of a world 'to which I muſt go, and from which I 'muſt never return is greater folly than

'ever

ever I was guilty of, ſaid that poor Wretch to his rich and great Maſter.

3. It is the property of a fool to refuſe a good offer. When that is offered to him, which would make him happy, if he had an heart and wiſdom to embrace it, he fooliſhly neglects his opportunity. Prov 17. 16. *Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wiſdom, ſeeing he has no heart to it.* Thus it is with Sinners: They have Spiritual Riches offered to them in the Goſpel; they are told of that which will enrich their Souls, and make them for ever. The *Unſearchable Riches of Chriſt* will do ſo. And that is freely offered to them in the Goſpel. Where that is preached, God from Heaven makes an offer of his Son to be an Husband and a Saviour to every Soul that will believe on him; but fooliſh Sinners make light of this offer, altho they never had, nor never ſhall have another offer like unto it. Mat. 22. 4, 5. *All things are ready; come unto the Marriage, but they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his Farm, and another to his Merchandize.* And are not they fools that will refuſe an offered Chriſt for a Farm? And all the Riches of the Son of God, the Heir of all things, for the Merchandize of this world?

Christ also offereth himself in the Gospel, but Sinners refuse him. *Wisdom*, that is *Christ*, complains of this folly in Sinners. Prov. 1. 24, 25. *I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded, but ye have set at naught all my counsel.* And that which addeth to the folly, is, that Sinners do thus again and again, many a time and often. The Lord Jesus Christ is graciously pleased to offer himself to them with all his saving benefits, but they continue in their refusals of him. Mat. 23. 37. *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy Children together, as an hen gathereth her Chickens under her wings, and ye would not.* Thus did they go on to reject the happiest offer that ever was made unto men.

4. It is the property of a fool to make an ill choice: Not only to refuse a good offer when he may have it, but to take a bad one. It has been the manner in Civil Courts, when any person has been impleaded for a fool, to try him by offering a piece of Gold and a Counter, something of great value, or an apple; if he chuseth the Counter rather than the Gold, the Apple rather than the Jewel, then he is cast for a fool, and his Estate taken from him,

and

and given to a wiſer perſon. But thus it is with Sinners, they chuſe trifles rather than treaſures, pebbles, (all the things of the world are no better when compared with ſpiritual and eternal good things) rather than the pearl of great price. They that chuſe Earth rather than Heaven, make a bad choice; yet this is the Sinners choice. When Chriſt ſaid to the young man in the Goſpel, Mat. 19. 22. *Go and ſell what thou haſt, and give to the poor, and thou ſhalt have treaſure in heaven, and come and follow me; when the young man heard that ſaying, he went away ſorrowful, for he had great poſſeſſions.* When it was put to his choice, we would part with Chriſt and Heaven, rather than forgo his worldly Intereſts. A rich *Cardinal* was not aſhamed to profeſs that he would not part with his Eſtate in *Paris*, for a portion in *Paradiſe*. There is not an ungodly man in the world, but if God ſhould ſay to him, thou ſhalt have thy choice, either to live upon this Earth for ever, and there to enjoy all ſenſual delights, or go to Heaven, and there enjoy the pleaſures which are at Gods Right hand for evermore; he would chuſe Earthly rather than Heavenly Pleaſures. But what a woful choice

do they make, who chuſe Hell rather than Heaven! This Sinners do. They love death. When life and death, heaven and hell are ſet before them, they chuſe death and hell. Ezek. 33. 11. *Why will you dy.* They will, they chuſe death in the cauſes of it: The things which will certainly end in death, are the things which they chuſe. For a man to chuſe Eternal rather than a Temporal Death, is a very unwiſe choice. It was well & wiſely ſaid by one of our Engliſh Martyrs when one tempted him to Conform againſt the light of his Conſcience, to the Superſtition of the Times; becauſe he would looſe his life if he did not, and (ſaid the Temter) death is bitter, and life is ſweet: To whom the Martyr replied, but *Death Eternal is more bitter, and Life Eternal is more ſweet.* Alas! Sinners have not the wiſdom to conſider this. *Joſhua* ſaid to the Children of *Iſrael*, *Chuſe you whom you will Serve, but I and my Houſe will ſerve the Lord.* Thus when it is ſaid to a Sinner, chuſe whom thou wilt have to be thy Maſter; he makes the unhappieſt choice that poſſibly can be: he chuſeth the worſt Maſter that ever any one did ſerve: For he chuſeth to be a Servant of Sin: he had rather

rather be a Slave than a Free man; yea, a Slave to Sin and Satan, then the Lords Free-man.

5. It is the property of a fool to contend with one that is too ſtrong for him. A Wiſe man will ſit down and conſider with himſelf, whether he is able with ten thouſand, to meet with him that cometh againſt him with twenty thouſand. *Luk.* 14. 31. Better ſit ſtill then riſe and fall. But Sinners have not the underſtanding to conſider this. They are ſo fooliſh as to ſet themſelves againſt one that is Infinitely too ſtrong for them. Is a Sinner a fit match for the Almighty? Is he able to make his patty good with that God before whom the Nations are as the drop of a bucket, and counted as the ſmall duſt of the ballance, yea leſs then nothing and vanity? Is he able to make his party good with that God, who holds all the water of the Sea in the hollow of his hand, and who meaſures Heaven with a ſpan. O Sinner, conſider with thy ſelf, what thou will do, when God ſhall ſtrike thee with thoſe hands which have made heaven and earth. *Do we provoke the Lord to jealouſie, are we ſtronger than he?* 1 *Cor.* 10. 22. What infinite folly are they guilty of that do ſo?

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Nevertheleſs the Sinner does ſo. Job. 15. 25,26. *For he ſtretcheth out his hand againſt God, and ſtrengthens himſelf againſt the Almighty, he runneth upon him, even on his neck, upon the thick boſſes of his buckler.* The Threatnings and Sanctions of the Divine Law are the boſſes of his buckler; but the Sinner regards them not. But canſt thou ſtand it out againſt God? Can thy hands be ſtrong, or can thy heart endure in the day that the Lord ſhall deal with thee? Haſt thou an arm like God? or canſt thou thunder with a voice like him? doſt thou not know that his Power is Irreſiſtible? When he caſts forth his Lightnings, what man is there that can ſtand before the Thunder of God? It is reported concerning *Caligula*, that for all he was *Emperour* of the World, when he heard it Thunder, he would run under his bed to hide himſelf. Hiſtories inform us of Kings that have been Slain with Lightning when they have been ſurrounded with Armies to defend them. Who can ſtand before the Omnipotent God when once he is angry? Rocks cannot, for the Rocks are thrown down by him, when his fury is poured out like fire. The Famous Iſland of *Sicily* ſaw this to be true not

not many years ſince. And the Kingdom of *Naples* ſaw it but a few months ago; when Rivers of Fire broke out of a Mountain near unto them. *Mountains* cannot ſtand before his Indignation: For he Overturns the Mountains in his anger, and thoſe Pillars of Heaven tremble at his reproof: Nay, Angels the mightieſt and moſt powerful Creatures in the World cannot ſtand before him: He ſpared not the Angels that ſinned, but caſt them down to Hell. It was Inexpreſſible folly in the Apoſtate Angels to ſet themſelves againſt their Almighty Creator? Well might *Eliphaz* ſay, *His Angels he charged with Folly.* Job 4. 18. If then ſilly Worms on the Earth ſhall riſe up againſt him, are they not fools for ſo doing.

6. It is the property of a fool to make fooliſh bargains: So does the Sinner do; for he barters away his precious Soul, and that for a thing of naught. There is no Sinner, but he has a Jewel belonging to him, more worth then all this world, namely, his precious and immortal Soul; this he parts with, and what has he in exchange for it? Nothing more than the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon. Was it not extream folly in *Eſau* to ſell his Birthright for

for a mess of pottage! but what horrible folly is it for a man to sell his Soul for the enjoyment of a sensual Lust? Rather then deny his sensual appetite in respect of a lust of Drunkenness, or of a lust of Uncleanness, he'll loose his soul. What greater folly can there be then to part with pleasures for evermore in Heaven, & to go into Eternal Torments, and all to enjoy the momentany pleasures of Sin? It was a sad word which a miserable man once uttered on a death-bed. *I have* (said he) *enjoyed the pleasures of sin for a little while, and now I must be in torment for infinite millions of Ages.*

Thus have we seen the Doctrine opened and confirmed in the particulars which have been mentioned. For the Improvement of it, we shall speak a few things briefly. Let the first *USE* be for *Instruction*, in two particulars.

Inf. 1. *What folly are they guilty of who make light of the greatest Sins?* There are those in the world that do so. Profane Swearing is a great Sin: Therefore does the Scripture say, *above all things Swear not, neither by Heaven, neither by the Earth, neither by any other Oath, lest you fall into Condemnation.* James 5.12. Yet there are some

who

who make light of this horrible Sin. If they be but a little provoked they'l Curse & Swear like Devils incarnate: And then think to Excuse it, by saying, such an one provoked me. And art not thou a Fool to provoke the Eternal God, only because thy Neighbour has provoked thee? There are *Oaths* unto which men to shew how light they make of being guilty of them, have given the Name of *Petty Oaths*: They think that for them to Swear by their Faith and by their Troth is a small evil if any at all: but it is a great Sin to do so. All Swearing by Creatures is a grievous sin. To *Swear by things that are no Gods* is great impiety. *Jer.* 5. 7. But the man that Swears *by his Faith & Troth*, Swears by things that are no Gods. How shall the Lord pardon them for this without Repentance. Drunkenness is a great and a Damning Sin: The word of the Lord says expressly that no man that is a Drunkard shall inherit the Kingdom of God. 1 *Cor.* 6. 10. Yet are there not those that make a mock of this Sin. Yea, that will make others Drunk on purpose, that so they may have something to laugh at, and to make themselves sport with. Ah! what Fools are they that will make themselves merry

merry with that, for the which they must be shut out of Heaven for ever! The Sin of Uncleanness is an abominable iniquity: The abhorred of the Lord shall fall into it. Well did *Joseph* say, when his impudent Mistress tempted him to that folly, *How can I do this great Wickedness & Sin against God*: Nevertheless, some that are guilty of it say, *They have done no Wickedness.* Prov. 30. 20. There was an unhappy Prince not long since, who by his Whoredoms & Adulteries debauched three Kingdoms. A man was hardly esteemed a Gentleman except he were a vile person. But if he would make no Conscience of the Seventh Commandment that would recommend him. What stupendous folly is it, to Commit the most disgraceful Sins without either remorse or shame, especially for persons of Quality to do so, who ought to be Examples of Vertue. When *Thamar* was Sollicited by a Courtier and a Royal Person to Consent unto a great Sin, she said, (and it was well and wisely spoken) *And I whither shall I cause my shame to go; and as for thee, thou shalt be as one of the fools in Israel.* 2 Sam. 13. 13. As for them who make a mock of the greatest Sins, (be they who they will) if ever God

God intend them mercy he will make them ſenſible of the greatneſs of their folly. There was a great inſtance hereof in the late Earle of *Rocheſter*, who had been as great an Atheiſt as perhaps was in King *Charles* his Court. But when God opened his eyes on a death-bed, he ſaid to his former Companions: (and gave it under his hand that it might make the greater impreſſion on them) be warned by me, as ever you regard the welfare of your immortal Souls, *no more to mock at ſin*. And another late Example like to this was in *Sir Alan Broderick*, who had been one of the greateſt *Debauches* of this Atheiſtical age, but when he was dying he bewayled his having ſpent ſo great a part of his Life in the *Sports and follies of Sin*, profeſſing that now he ſaw *the Folly and Unreaſonableneſs of Sin*, ſo as that no Temptation in the world could prevail with him to ſin any more as formerly.

Inf. 2. *Sinners are to be pitied and mourned over.* We bear with Fools: If we know them to be ſuch, we pity them and bear with their folly; Sinners are the miſerableſt fools in the World: And ſhall no body pitty them? If we ſhould ſee diſtracted perſons deſtroying their own bodies,

bodies, would we not pity them, and be sorry for them? How much more when we see distracted Sinners destroying their own Souls. What though they desire none of our pity? And what though they should wrong us, and reproach and revile us, yet let us pity them, for they know not what they do. The Time will come when they will see and be ashamed of their folly: Though for the present because madness is in their hearts, they are not ashamed, nevertheless they shall be made sensible. Isa. 26. 11. *They will not see but they shall see and be ashamed.* Either God will Convert them and so make them see their folly: Grace is Wisdom in the inward parts. True Repentance is (a *resipience*) a growing wise again. Hence it was said of the returning Prodigal, that *He came to himself.* Luk 15 17. He was not himself when he spent his Estate in riotous Living. If he had not been mad he would never have done so; but he saw his folly in departing from his Fathers house where he had bread enough and to spare, & in bringing upon himself poverty, and misery and death. Or, if Sinners are not in a way of unfeigned Repentance, made to see their folly whilst they are in this world, they will see it and lament it for ever in

another world: When they are put in Prison, and cast into the Dungeon; so are they that are mad sometimes brought to themselves. Thus when Sinners shall be cast into that Dungeon where is *blackness of darkness for ever*, they will be made sensible of their folly. Therefore we should pitty and mourn over them: They that are Regenerate and made wise unto Salvation, should pitty the folly of unregenerate ones, and the rather because they themselves once were such. Tit. 3. 2, 3. *Let us shew all meekness towards all men, for we our selves were sometimes foolish.*

USE 2. Let us be *Exhorted to practise as the Doctrine calls for.* And how is that? *Ans.* Instead of many particulars, I shall mention but two.

1. This Doctrine calls upon us to be deeply humbled for Sin. What has a fool to be proud of? No Sinner has cause to be proud of any thing, but to come down and sit in the dust before the Lord all his dayes. It is an humbling thing to be left to an act of folly, but what then is it to have an heart full of nothing else but folly? so has the Sinner. Rom. 7. 18. *I know that in me, that is in my flesh dwelleth no good thing.*

thing. They that are only flesh, that have nothing but nature in them, have nothing but sin and folly dwelling in them; and they have been guilty of innumerable acts of extream folly, the thought whereof ought to humble them. Every Sinner may make *Sauls* confession. 1 Sam. 26. 21. *I have sinned, I have played the fool, I have erred exceedingly.* Sinners have been doing nothing but *playing the fool* all their dayes. For what have they been doing? What have they been thinking of? What have their cares been exercised about all their dayes? only or chiefly about their Bodies, and not their Souls; not how they may make sure of Heaven, but how they may live, and get Estates on the Earth. *This their way is their folly.* Psal. 49. 13. And they into whose hearts God has put spiritual wisdom, have cause sad enough to walk humbly all their dayes, remembring what fools once they were. *Remember what you were in times past.* Eph. 2. 11. How sinful, how fooliſh! There was a Time when you had no spiritual wisdom in you; a time when you were in ignorance; a time when you knew not God. Let us remember those dayes. and the folly of them, and let the thought of them

keep

keep us humble as long as we ſhall have a day to live. Moreover, there is a great deal of folly ſtill remaining in the wiſeſt and holieſt heart on the earth: We ſee it in *David*, a man wiſe like an Angel of God, yet what pride and folly did he diſcover in cauſing *Joab* to number the people, which he himſelf was very ſenſible of afterwards, confeſſing his ſin and folly, and begging pardon for it. 2 Sam 24. 10. *Lord, take away the iniquity of thy Servant, for I have done very fooliſhly.* We ſee the like in *Hezekiah*. What fooliſh pride did that wiſe and good man diſcover to be in his heart, when the Ambaſſadors from *Babylon* came to him. God left him that he might know what was in his heart; And he ſaw ſuch pride and folly there, as brought him upon his knees before the Lord. 2 *Chron.* 32. 26. *Hezekiah humbled himſelf for the pride of his heart.* And the Truth is, that the more wiſdom and grace any man has in his ſoul, the more has he of a deep and humbling ſence of the folly which is in his heart. This we ſee in the holy Pſalmiſt, who expreſſeth himſelf with ſuch humble words as thoſe, in Pſal. 73. 22. *So fooliſh was I and ignorant, I was as a beaſt before thee.* And we ſee it

it in *Agur*, Prov. 30. 2, 3. *Surely I am more bruitish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man, I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the Holy.* Such a deep and humbling sence had he of his own weakness, and want of wisdom.

2. Oh turn from Sin immediately. If Sin is folly, then to turn from Sin unto the wayes of Holiness, is wisdom. Sinners leave your folly. You will never be wise until you turn from sin. Oh then, cease to do evil, and learn to do well: And do it now. The voice of the Prophets of God in all their Sermons was, *Turn ye now every one from his evil way.* Jer. 25. 5. You can't turn from sin too soon, but you may think of turning when it will be too late. Why will you retain such an enemy as Sin? If a man should have a Serpent in his bosome, would he not get rid of it immediately. Sin is such a Serpent; it will sting thee to death, if thou dost not make haste to get clear of it. To delay this matter is dangerous folly. If *Lot* had delayed his going out of *Sodom* one day longer, he had lost his life. So has many an unhappy man lost his Soul, by delaying his Repentance one day.

day. Oh ſtay no longer leſt haply the day of grace ſhould be ended, and the door of mercy ſhut againſt thee. Remember the Fooliſh Virgins, who when it was too late, cryed, *Lord, Lord, open to us.* What is the diſmal cry of the Damned in Hell for ever? Yea, what is the cry of thoſe that have gone out of our Congregations, from the hearing of Sermons to Hell? Is it not this? Wo are we for ever, becauſe we did not Turn from ſin ſoon enough? Wo unto us for ever, becauſe we delayed our Turning from ſin! we thought we would repent ſome time hereafter, but before that time came, Death Seized on us, and now it is too late. Oh that Sinners would conſider this! Oh that they would be wiſe unto Salvation. *Turn now* unto God in Jeſus Chriſt, and all your paſt ſins and follies ſhall be forgiven. And for your Encouragement in Turning to the Lord, remember that God has promiſed, that his Elect ſhall Turn into the way of Holineſs, *and the wayfaring men though fools ſhall not err therein.*

The End.

ERRATA. Page 3. l. 12. After you, add *with*. p. 68. l. 16. r. *HOLELIM.*